

**Prudential Committee
Regular Board Meeting
Monday, May 9, 2011
*Minutes***

Board Members Present: Charlee Day, Michael Smith, John Gazo, Marla Durham

Administrators Present: Michael Deweese, Judy DeNova, Grant Geisler

Others Present: Polly Whitcomb McEwing

Visitors to be Heard: Polly Whitcomb McEwing

Charlee Day, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm at the Park Street School, 21 Park Street, Essex Junction, VT.

Request for Tax Relief:

Michael Deweese met previously on April 28th with Polly and Lorenzo. Polly was present to answer any questions. Summary packet of where the committee left off regarding the request for tax relief was passed out by Michael Deweese. The packet contained a letter to the Prudential Committee Members, dated May 9, 2011; letter from the Whitcomb Family, LLC, dated January 21, 2011; memo to Michael Deweese from Lynette Corbin, Clerk/Treasurer, dated February 17th, 2011; Tax Stabilization Agreement; Farm Tax Relief Agreement; note from Polly Whitcomb McEwing, dated April 29, 2011; Town of Williston tax bill; Village of Essex Junction tax bill and The Vermont Land Trust pamphlet.

The Whitcombs are looking for relief from future taxes. The Whitcombs have been granted tax relief for all their village taxes for the next three years. Hiawatha does use the Whitcomb Farm currently for 1 to 3 field trips per year and also after school programs. The Whitcomb Farm is the final operating farm in the community. The Whitcombs seek the community to help share the tax burden. They have the option of selling off further pieces of the farm for development but feel it would not be in the best interest of the community.

The Town of Essex has not yet made their decision. The Board agreed to further discussion on this item and Administration was charged with determining the tax implication for the individual taxpayer and will bring that information to the next Board meeting for further discussion.

Principal's Reports:

The Board offered congratulations to Laurie Singer, who has been selected as Middle School Principal of the Year and Tom Bochanski, who has been selected as Elementary Principal of the Year for the State of Vermont. They will formally receive their awards in August and will be representing Vermont in September 2011 in Washington, D.C. Michael mentioned that it may be of interest to share the principal reports so that the viewers can hear the information. The Board agreed and will select board members to summarize each school's principal reports in future meetings.

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Summit Street Natural Playground:

Planning continues for construction of a natural playground. Property Services Director Bruce Murdough is working with the Natural Playground Company and Village representatives to prepare for Planning Commission review/approval of the project, and to hopefully receive a permit for Phase I work. The Summit PTO previously requested the Prudential Committee cover the costs related to Planning Commission approval. The estimate for this cost is estimated around \$2,500.

Michael Smith moved/Marla seconded motion to contribute \$2,500 to the Summit Street School Natural Playground. Motion passed 4-0.

Review of Current Process for Tax Collection:

Michael Dewese walked the Board through the process of tax collection, which is essentially a service arrangement. This process includes work performed by two Village employees required for general current and delinquent school tax billing and collecting, transfers of school tax receipts to the school account, and, in addition, includes the District's share of costs for current tax bill forms, printing monthly delinquent notice forms, postage and mailing services for issuing current tax bills, postage for mailing monthly delinquent notices, general programming services for running yearly current tax bills, and supplying the District with weekly school tax deposits receipts reports and monthly, current and delinquent tax collecting report updates. See attached Tax Collection Agreement with the Village.

The tax collection agreement with the Village, after yearly CPI increases, costs \$20,424. The remaining costs of \$25,791 are associated with homestead tax liability and non-residential liability.

Administration's assessment is that it would be difficult for CCSU or the EJSD to accomplish the tax collection operation for less than \$46,000, since there isn't really a built-in efficiency similar to the Village. The Board concurred and made the decision to continue with the agreement with the village.

Consent Agenda:

The Consent Agenda consisted of: approval of warrants, approval of April 25 meeting minutes, accepting of a retirement notice, accepting of a resignation notice, voting by proxy, approving a request for a tuition waiver, approving the Hiawatha renovation bid, and appointing the EJSD Clerk and Treasurer.

The April 25 meeting minutes and the Hiawatha renovation bid were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Marla moved /John seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed 4 -0.

The meeting minutes from April 25, 2011 were amended. Marla passed out copies of the amended minutes. The previous meeting minutes were out of order. See attached amended minutes.

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John moved/Michael Smith seconded the motion to approve amended Monday, April 25th, 2011 meeting minutes. The motion passed 4-0.

Hiawatha Renovation Bid:

Discussion ensued on why there were two phases of construction and the cost of the project itself.

Marla moved/Michael Smith seconded the bid of \$197,000 for the construction and authorized negotiation to enclose the vestibule. Motion passed 4-0.

Future Agenda Items:

- Whitcomb tax relief
- School principal report
- Summit Street School playground bids
- Professional appointments
- Tax anticipation bids
- Follow up with ADL Grade 8 – freshman high school Algebra math students.

Meeting Re-Cap:

Marla questioned the relevancy of the recap.

Executive Session:

Marla moved/John seconded at 7:56 PM to move into executive session to discuss labor relations. Motion passed 4-0.

The Board re-entered open session and adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Fontaine

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Board Recorder